

REMARKS

The Applicants have carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action of 27 November 2006 and wish to express their appreciation for the substantive allowance of claims 15 and 30. In response to this Office Action the Applicants amend independent claims 1 and 16 so as to more clearly patentably distinguish these claims from the cited art. Remarks supporting the patentability of the claims follow.

The Rejection of Claims 1-9, 13, 14, 16-19, 21-24, 28, 29, 31 and 32 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Based upon U.S. Patent 6,499,262 to Pinchot et al. when considered in combination with U.S. Patent 5,644,872 to Perdue

As amended, independent claim 1 reads upon a ceiling panel comprising a main frame, at least two crossing members within the main frame and a veil facing material containing glass fibers, wherein that facing material is adhered to the main frame and the crossing members. Further, claim 1 provides that each of the at least two crossing members contacts the main frame at two points and bridges the veil facing material between those two points. Support for this amendment is found throughout the specification including, for example, in the text in the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4 and the first full paragraph on page 4 and in drawing figure 1.

As set forth in the Office Action, the primary reference to Pinchot et al “discloses a ceiling panel (12) having a main frame (17), at least two crossing members (57), and a veil facing material (18) adhered to the main frame (17), column 4, lines 57-60.” As should be appreciated from reviewing Figure 3 and the text of the Pinchot et al reference at column 3, lines 36-44, the “crossing members (57)” are merely the legs of the angle bracket 56. These are assembled in the channels 41 of two frame side members in order to form a corner. The legs 57 do

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not contact the main frame at two points and bridge the veil facing material between those two points as set forth in current claim 1 of the present application. Further, no such bridging structure of cross members is in any way taught or suggested in the Pinchot et al reference.

The secondary reference to Perdue is only cited for its disclosure of a ceiling panel having a glass fibrous fabric facing (14). The Perdue et al reference also fails to in any way teach or suggest providing crossing-members that bridge the main frame as set forth in current claim 1. Based upon this structural distinction it is believed that claim 1 very clearly patentably distinguishes over the cited art and should be formally allowed. Similarly, claims 2-9, 13, 14 and 31 which depend from claim 1 and are rejected on the same grounds are equally allowable for the same reasons.

Independent method claim 16 has been amended to include the step of providing first and second crossing members within the main frame wherein each of the first and second crossing members contacts the main frame at two points and bridges between the main frame between those two points. As noted above, no such structure is taught or suggested in the Pinchot et al and Perdue references. This is true whether those references are considered alone or in combination. Accordingly, claim 16 patentably distinguishes over the art and should be formally allowed. Claims 17-24, 28, 29 and 32 which depend from claim 16 and are rejected on the same grounds are equally allowable for the same reasons.

In summary, all of the pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art and should be formally allowed. Upon careful review and consideration it is believed that the Examiner will agree with this proposition. Accordingly, the early issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

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Applicants authorize any fees required pertaining to this response be
charged to Deposit Account 50-0568.

Respectfully submitted,
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